

Night of disaster

LAST SEASON'S Chesham United goalkeeper, Kevin O'Brien, was subjected to an unfortunate initiation to Wycombe Wanderers' side when all about him failed miserably in the first half of this Mithras Cup third round second leg at Dagenham.

Although playing a makeshift line up, there was no excuse for a woeful 45 minutes, in which the damage was done. Dagenham had cancelled out a one-goal lead and opened up a three-goal advantage of their own.

The Wycombe defence was slack, and paid a tough price for their failings, with the Athenian Leaguers advancing to the semi-finals on an aggregate of 6-2.

Dagenham destroyed Wanderers with three goals in six minutes in a spell of skilful attacking football.

Wycombe attacked from the start in an effort to increase their 2-1 lead from the first leg played last season. But the Daggers' defence, led magnificently by John Still, resisted the pressure put on them and gradually got on top.

Dagenham were always prepared to challenge for the ball and made full use of the spaces left by the poor running Wanderers.

After seven minutes they were justly rewarded. George Dudley pushed a ball to Fred Pudney whose centre was only partially cleared by the Wanderers' defence. The ball travelled straight to the feet of Brian Wozley who hit it from 25 yards crashing netwards.

Dagenham, roared on by the crowd, piled on the pressure. Four minutes later they were two up. Drake rounded a defender to pass the ball to Dudley, who cut in and moved across the goalmouth. He failed

Dagenham 5, Wycombe W. 0

to shoot and instead placed a square ball for Brooks to barge it in.

Constantly attacking, the Daggers were firing shots from all angles at O'Brien, and in the 13th minute increased the lead to three. Pudney moved into a space, found himself unchallenged, and shot home.

Dagenham found it all too easy to penetrate the Wycombe defence and when ever Wanderers broke into attack they were competently handled by the quick tackling home rearguard.

Wycombe were repeatedly, finding the high crosses from right-back Daniels hard to combat and it was from just such a cross that Dagenham scored another goal in the 23rd minute.

Daniels' centre was punched clear by goalie O'Brien, but the

ball went straight to Brook who volleyed it into the net from close range.

Two minutes before half-time, O'Brien brilliantly pushed a Fred Pudney header over the bar. But almost on the interval, Pudney picked up the ball again and seeing O'Brien advancing from his goal towards him, he passed possession to Martin Smith, who made a lot of ground before steering the fifth goal home.

Rain fell during the interval and seemed to dampen the game. Against a Wanderers' side smarting under a verbal lashing from their manager at half-time, Dagenham, who had run riot in the first period, slowed the game down and lost much of their rhythm. But despite Wycombe's attempts to pull at least one goal back with six men venturing into attack, Dagenham's defence held firm.